

U.S. EPA/CDC Chronic Disease, Environmental Stressors National and International Collaborations

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The US EPA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have been working together to improve the quality, access, and usability of human health and environmental data under the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by the then Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Service (HHS) and the Administrator of US EPA in September of 2002. The opening purpose clause of the MOU includes the following; "...HHS and US EPA will seek jointly to advance efforts to achieve mutual environmental public health goals and, in doing so, strengthen the bridge between the environmental and public health communities...."

When the Pew Environmental Health Commission issued its call in 2001 to improve the methods we use to systematically track information about the health of Americans and their environment at all levels, CDC, HHS, and US EPA began a process to foster collaborative activities and partnerships between their organizations and at the local and State level. These efforts sought to determine the needs and actions that could meet the goal of mutual environmental public health policy. Three years of cooperative experience have identified the most promising topic areas for continued cooperation and actions.

Much of the work done between the parties has sought to take the intuitive sense that health and environment information integration will provide advantages and turn that sense into real action for program management, measurement, and improved results. This has required and will continue to require specific efforts to work through detailed examples of information integration and knowledge creation. The complexities of terminology, data access, and science issues, including establishing exposure measurement or modeling and appropriate determinations of causation, all must be examined and solved to create real solutions and value from health surveillance and environment information integration.

The overall goal is to provide support for national and, where appropriate, international policy regarding health and environment in linking the data. These efforts are creating a store of accessible knowledge and experience that make it possible, and in some places simply easier, for public policy officials at all levels to examine human health and environmental conditions together. This effort will create a mosaic of identified needs that are national in scope, but also assist the work of our partners at the State and community level. It will result in improved data access and policy and continued development of institutional relationships necessary for successful collaboration.

The poster and presentation will provide the following information and foster discussion about activities between US EPA and CDC:

- Brief overview of current collaborative projects, including cardiopulmonary data and air quality monitoring
- Detail of grant-supported State and community activities under CDC initiatives and US EPA Challenge Grants
- Informatics collaborations for interoperability using standards and metadata management techniques
- International, global collaborations for health and environment indicators development with European authorities, the World Health Organization (WHO), and others.

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